

PHILOSOPHICAL CONSIDERATIONS:

O R,

A FREE ENQUIRY INTO THE MERITS

OF A CONTROVERSY

BETWEEN

DR. PRIESTLY AND DR. PRICE,

O N

MATTER AND SPIRIT AND PHILOSOPHICAL NECESSITY,

WITH AN

INTRODUCTORY ESSAY ON THE SUBJECT AT LARGE.

By M. DAWES of the Inner Temple, Esq;

(*Author of an Essay on Intellectual Liberty and Toleration, &c.*)

“ All animals are endowed with faculties necessary to their
“ preservation, and no other; man only is possessed of those
“ which are superfluous.”

ROUSSEAU.

L O N D O N:

Printed for T. CADELL in the Strand,

M, DCC, LXXX.

lit. hist. v. 15.

PHILOSOPHICAL CONSIDERATIONS

OF

A FREE LECTURE TO THE MEMBERS

OF THE COLLEGE OF SURGEONS

AND THE MEDICAL SOCIETY

OF THE CITY OF LONDON

ON

MATTER AND SPIRIT AND PHILOSOPHICAL NEEDEDNESS

WITH AN

INTRODUCTION BY THE HON. MR. JUSTICE



BY MR. DAVIES OF THE LONDON BAR

LECTURED ON BY MR. DAVIES OF THE LONDON BAR

PRINTED BY J. JOHNSON, ST. PAUL'S CHURCH-YARD, LONDON.

S. O. N. D. O.

PRINTED BY J. JOHNSON, ST. PAUL'S CHURCH-YARD, LONDON.

M. DCCC. XXXX.

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P R E F A C E.

IN an age when the works of the Deity are freely examined; the most distant and recondite regions penetrated and explored; the bowels of the earth refined; the elements analysed; and nature herself laid open to our view, little can be required by way of apology for that *freedom of thought*, which, unshackled and partaking of the subtle and all-vivifying air, rapidly advances us towards human perfection.

Discovery and improvement in these busy days, take place of prejudice, indolence, and folly; a pleasing evidence that knowledge, like water, will find its level; and banish the giant ignorance from the œconomy of the mind.

To this *freedom of thought* is owing all the information we now possess; and men have accordingly been tempted to study, discover, and make known the fruits of their industry; whereby important truths, which otherwise would remain concealed from us, have been disseminated to the honour of the free enquirer.

But although the most valuable advantages have resulted from the *freedom of our thought*, it has exposed some men to censure and reproach; who, regardless of themselves, have
sowed

sowed the seeds of that harvest, which they have cheerfully left for others to reap; and have worn away their lives in the fatigues of science.

Eminence attracts the eye of envy; and reprehension is the duty collected from it; and so tremendous to some men is truth, tho' simple and elegant, that they dread her very name; hold her but up, submissive, meek, and placid as in reality she is, and (like a Gorgon) she terrifies the *bigot*, strips the *enthusiast* of his illusions, and staggers all the objects of the *believers* faith; men, therefore, who (defying prejudice, and breaking the chains of education,) stand forth in her most glorious cause, often meet with reprobation, sometimes persecution; happily, they find a reward in virtue, and from virtuous men; and censure but estimates their worth in proportion to its measure, and the character of those who censure.

In the hope (no doubt) that some advantage would arise to science, Dr. *Priestly* has favoured the public with an *Essay on Matter and Spirit, and Philosophical Necessity*; and, taking by the hand the much admired Dr. *Price*, he has concluded his treatise of those lofty subjects by a friendly controversy.

It is this controversy that has seduced and beguiled a timid and humble writer, though he hopes a candid and liberal one, to try the merits of a philosophical cause at the bar of his intellectual court; an undertaking perilous and

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unwelcome; perilous, because bold and adventurous; unwelcome, because few readers are to be found, who contemplate the studies of the best philosophers, much less the writings of a person who (plain and artless) presumes to interfere between such men as Dr. *Priestly* and Dr. *Price*.

As it notwithstanding occurred to him that something might be said by *a third person*, to their honour, as respecting their ingenuity; and advantage, as respecting the object of their controversy; he consequently considered it freely and deliberately.

If any thing be advanced in his considerations proving, or tending to prove, that they have disputed about *nothing*, or that, on the other hand, they have exposed the weakness of their arguments in *favour* of Christianity, which they separately pretend to defend; he is assured that neither of them will blame him. Fearless then of all reproach, though he professes to be governed in his enquiry by *common sense only*; and relying on a perusal of what he now submits, by men *capable of understanding the subject in question*; if he should appear to point out any thing new or convincing, it will be an ample apology for his presumption, in publicly interfering in a philosophical dispute.

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ERRATA.

Page 2 line 21, for *bunt*, read *hunts*; p. 33 l. 7, for *capitate*,
 read *captivate*; p. 35 l. 7, for *depends*, read *depend*; p. 56 l. 23
 after *poignant*, dele *of*.

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INTRODUCTION.

MR. HUME says, there is no method of reasoning more common, and yet none more blamable, than in philosophical disputes to endeavour the refutation of any hypothesis by a pretence of its dangerous consequence to religion and morality; for the honor therefore of philosophy, and in order to enlarge the road to truth, free of every obstacle, which ignorance, enthusiasm, or bigotry might occasion, it is necessary that we should avoid such topics as tend to make an adversary odious, and not confine ourselves in the pursuit of knowledge to mere precept.

If the author of the following pages should not appear, in the estimation of Dr. Priestley or Dr. Price, to have said any thing new, or raised any significant objection to their respective arguments, he relies on their superior good sense and that christian meekness of spirit which pervades their polemical writings, to be at least indulged with their attention to those humble thoughts

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which their philosophical correspondence has raised in his mind.

He has read the dispute between these able men with entertainment; and altho' he has not obtained that instruction from it, which a philosopher searches for in truth, it has created so many doubts, and compelled him to propose so many questions in consequence, that there seems not the smallest pretence to apologize for saying (as may be observed hereafter) that they have ended their controversy where they began it; and instead of solving their own apparent difficulties, have accumulated new ones.

This has ever been the result of abstruse discussion, which renders metaphysics embarrassing but interesting; embarrassing because uncertain, and the disputants do not always agree or affix the same ideas to the same terms employed in the controversy; interesting, because each of them hunt alike for one and the same thing in the important object of truth; which goes a great way to convince us, that as philosophers have arrived at no determinate conclusion in metaphysics (which are objectionable to as the cause of error) they attempt to discuss questions out of the reach of human capacity.

There is some reason for saying this, for ought that at present appears to the contrary, but as it may not be sufficient to prevent philosophers

sophers from carrying on their war, and as they will not abandon an airy pursuit, and discover the proper boundaries of human reason, it is right to accompany them in their disquisitions, because despair is a foe to knowledge, and hope will keep our industry alive, whereby succeeding labourers may accomplish discoveries unknown to their predecessors.

Hence we ought patiently and submissively to follow them thro' all their walks and deliberate on their philosophical investigations. To this end the subsequent thoughts are now offered to the public, and the reader must determine the honour they may reflect on the writer as a philosopher; a character distinct from the bulk of mankind, and which, as a very ingenious author observes, * has in all the sciences certain fancied points, particular chimeras, after which he runs without being able to overtake them; instancing the philosophers stone in chymistry, the quadrature of a circle in geometry, the longitude in astronomy, and the perpetual motion in mechanicks; which it is useful to enquire after, as by that means other virtues may be acquired.

It is necessary in all things to propose to ourselves a certain point of perfection beyond our abilities to reach; for we should never set out

* Fontenelle.

f we thought of arriving no farther than we shall in fact, which makes it agreeable to us to have some imaginary view in order to animate our pursuits.

The great question between Dr. *Priestly* and Dr. *Price*, is, what is really and truly the object in all they have advanced against each other? The former gentleman, whose genius and learning are above compliment, has told us, that his view has been, to establish christianity by extinguishing the *whole man at death*; and the latter, equally a zealous christian, a good and learned man, contends, that as brutes are not to rise again, man *does not wholly extinguish at death, for that his soul lives for ever.*

If this be the whole of their controversy on matter and spirit, they are at issue, and it remains to be determined which is right; happy would it be for either of them to be convinced which is wrong; but altho' after the justice they have done their respective opinions, they have appealed to the public on their propriety; the thought of combating them in the most trifling circumstance, is so tremendously arduous, that possibly they will be but little affected by any thing contained in these pages; and find no inducement to withdraw from pursuits hitherto so wild, and which have closed in nothing satisfactory.

If however it be otherwise, and they bestow their attention to considerations which they in
their

their candid correspondence have suggested, the warmest hopes will be returned them, that in whatever they have hitherto philosophically failed, they may succeed in hereafter beyond their most sanguine expectation. Yet it may be asked, what advantage can be derived from such pursuits, supposing what we have no reason to do, that they may be successful? At any rate, all we want to know is, what Dr. *Priestly* and Dr. *Price* know themselves, and whether their contest be not altogether verbal.

When philosophers have gone thro' particular disquisitions concerning truth, they often think they have found it; they do not consider that they should oppose to the utility of one boasted truth, the mischief of a thousand errors fallen into by making the discovery. The science which enlightens is useful, but the pretended science which misleads, is certainly destructive; the difficulty is to distinguish between both, but such is the fact, that could we teach our vain curiosity not to thirst after that information unsuited to our condition, we should not be the dupes of falsehood. Tho' self-denial in this, would be prudent, philosophers would not call it wise, because it would clog those enquiries, which soon or late may possibly be successful.

Dr. *Priestly* professedly contends for a resurrection, and that our hope of a future state depends on Christianity, Dr. *Price* says almost the

the same, but denies the manner contended for by Dr. Priestly, in which such resurrection is to be effectuated; so that these generous disputants agree in the *end* but not in the *means* of this part of their controversy.

Respecting the other part of it on the doctrine of necessity they appear not to be at so much variance; and as their object is more simple and intelligible than the means of a resurrection, less objections have arisen on either side; but particularly on that of Dr. Priestly, who instead of discussing his point after the manner of Mr. Hume, and dropping it suddenly when he comes to consider whether the Deity can be the author of Sin, or the ultimate cause of all our actions, he has thrown in some new thoughts, which have alarmed Dr. Price, and set him at a much greater distance from his worthy friend than on the subject of matter and spirit.

The dispute in this particular, altho' conducted with a seeming difference of expression, closes in unanimity, and the respectable disputants anticipate the umpirage of a third person by uniting in sentiments thereon, which has rendered an examination thereof the less arduous or intricate.

While we admire the one for his simplicity, and think him in a degree overcome, first by his adversary and then by himself; * we may ob-

* *Fortior est qui se, quam qui fortissime vincit menia.*

ject to the other in those passages wherein he has carried his enquiries further than Mr. *Hume* had done before him on the same subject, and in so doing has exposed himself to those censures which in all probability Mr. *Hume* suspected when stopping short, he said, "These are mysteries which mere natural unassisted reason is very unfit to handle." And that to reconcile the indifference and contingency of human actions with prescience, or to defend absolute decrees, and yet free the Deity from being the author of Sin, has been found hitherto to exceed all the powers of philosophy."

May we not second this deceased philosopher, and say, that so extensive is the prospect which opens to us in an attempt to solve these mysteries, that it promises nothing but confusion! And that the whole view tends to assure us, that such attempt (if pursued) would end in darkness!

But it is not because our disputants disagree and have proved nothing, that they should discontinue their future disquisitions; possibly what is unknown to them at present, may be known hereafter, when their penetrating and ever active genius may triumph over the failures of their predecessors, and exultingly reward them for former labour. A hope † of atcheiving so

† In hopes to overtake the skipping light,
The vapours dances in his dazzling sight,
Till spent it leaves him to eternal night.

Rochester.

hard

hard an adventure, rouses each curious philosopher from indolence; and forgetting that nature has pointed out a mixt kind of life as most suited to him; at the same time warning him not to incapacitate himself for other occupations and amusements, he is encouraged to push on in his philosophical career.

The strength of mind in some men fortifies them against those popular reproaches, which others of a more feeble constitution severely feel. This gave Mr. *Hume* great and good reason to say what he supposed nature to say to him, " Indulge your passion for science, but
 " let your science be human, and such as may
 " have a deference to action and society.—
 " Abstruse thought and profound reasoning I
 " prohibit, and will severely punish by the
 " pensive melancholly they introduce, by the
 " endless uncertainty in which they involve
 " you, and by the cold reception which
 " your pretended discoveries shall meet with
 " when communicated. Be a philosopher, but
 " amidst all your philosophy be a man."

If abstruse philosophy be founded on a turn of mind which cannot enter on business and action, does it not vanish when the philosopher leaves the shade and comes into open day? Or do its principles retain any influence on our conduct and behaviour? It has been asserted that the feelings of our heart, the agitation of our passions, the vehemence of our affections dissipate
 all

all its conclusions, and reduce the profound philosopher to a mere man.

Nature hence appears to convince us how great the difficulty is of practising in society those maxims, or benefiting by that wisdom which we acquire in theory; and our practice and theory not in the least corresponding, we feel, as social beings, those effects of habit and prejudice which society only affords us—Our affections bandy us about in society in proportion to our vanity, folly, ambition, and wants; which naturally and individually it is possible we should be ignorant of; for while subject only to physical calls, we are capable of satisfying all our wants; but by the introduction of superfluous ones, we become in spite of philosophy subject to passions which make us forget as men, what we had learned as philosophers; and thus it is, that as social beings we know nothing of that happiness we seem so much in quest of. Naturally our happiness is as simple as our way of living, and it consists in our being free from pain. It is constituted by health, liberty, and the *necessaries* of life; but it is otherwise in society, and strange as it is, we there find our miseries, which society alone occasions: wise and important as philosophy appears to us in theory, according to our attachments in and love of society, will be the agitation of our passions, the measure and inordinance of our desires, and the fluctuation of our misfortunes;

an ample proof that our greatest happiness is of a retired nature.

If it should appear that Dr. *Priestly* and Dr. *Price* have reached their *ne plus ultra*, and that they are arrived no nearer their journey's end than when they sat out upon it, may we not (if applicable) call to mind the sentiments of Mr. Pope, and deem their whole discussion :

Mere curious pleasure and ingenious pain,
Or tricks to shew the stretch of human brain?

And may we not say, that because our disputants have employed themselves to no satisfaction, that they have employed themselves in vain? it is suspected we may : the question then is, to what end has the one striven to convince us that matter and spirit are inseparably mortal, or the other that the latter is eternally existing and the former perishable? Will it be their learning, their discernment, or what, that we are to admire in the search of truth ; and while each of them supposes he has found it, sees it only in his own mind's eye, without being able to communicate it to a second person? We here want a sufficient answer, and can expect no other than that the disputants have been engaged in the laudable cause of truth, for which, however unsuccessfully, they are nevertheless irreproachable.—Granted—but will their ill success in not discovering the truths they explore
not

not make them conscious, how great, incomprehensibly great is the Almighty! how weak and insignificant is man! wise only in folly! in folly only wise! and that all his efforts beyond certain limits tell him, "Thus far shalt thou go, and no farther?"

Philosophy is an exhilarating, an enchanting refuge; but it may affect our little happiness, and by producing in the most curious and industrious philosopher nothing on particular subjects, oblige us to recollect that there are men

—like cloyster'd coxcombs, who
Retire to think, 'cause they have nought to do.

And that man is not formed for those pursuits which too much curiosity sets him upon, but that he is rather made for action and society*.

From our thirst of truth we suffer in proportion to our disappointments in the discovery of it—In this we may sympathize with Dr. *Priestly* and Dr. *Price*; but should it appear that the one has introduced a doctrine in pretended favour of Christianity, which on an analysis entirely defeats it, except as to the article of *faith*, while the other has argued on miraculous principles, it can be no cause of indignation in either, to shew that under the cloak of philosophy they have stript themselves of all religious co-

* Thoughts are giv'n for actions government,
Where action ceases thought's impertinent. Roch.

vering, and denounced to the microscopic eye, that they are complete unbelievers of an after state, from any other evidence but revelation!

It is impossible to trace the heart of man through all its meanders, and whatever he may appear in his philosophy, may be mere deception, as internally he is often one thing, and externally another. Thus human actions contradict the theory of philosophy, and we read a man as a philosopher, who by experience we know to be no more than man; that is to say, no otherwise a philosopher than by acting in common with common men, which, as a creature of habit, will reduce him to a level with them, call forth an exertion of all his passions, and he will by experience in a world to which he is suited, be convinced, after all his cloyster'd wisdom, that Nature has ever been the same.

Without condemning profound reasoning, and allowing all pursuits of knowledge to be praise-worthy, especially that sort which relates to our duty and conduces to our happiness, independent of those crooked reasonings which involve us in mystery and darkness,

“ What can we reason, but from what we know?”

And where is the encouragement to proceed in search after what we have no foundation for? Such a search may amuse the mere philosopher, a character unwelcomed to the world, because he contributes nothing to the advantage or pleasure of society; but if Dr. *Priestly* and Dr. *Price* intended to give unquestion-

tionable proofs that their controversy were for the *honour of christianity and the service of mankind*, one would imagine that their coming forward and concluding their debate in the way they have done, was deviating from their purpose, and exposing them to opinions absolutely subversive of it; for where a man advances a doctrine, which induces his readers to condemn the inference he draws from it, they will conclude that he condemns it also in private, whatever he may appear to do in public; if so, philosophy is abused, be his integrity what it may, by employing it in support of what he does not believe himself.

That Dr. *Priestly* in particular, expected such an observation might be made, seems evident by his saying in his introduction to his correspondence with Dr. *Price*, (p. 12.) that “all that
“is to be considered in this case is, whether
“any of the opinions contended for by Dr.
“*Price* and myself, will, if proved to be false,
“weaken our faith in the great doctrine of a
“future state of retribution, or indispose the
“heart to the love of God or man.”

Now, respecting that faith, as it may be impossible to prove their opinions false, tho’ neither new or consistent, we can judge them only by conjecture, which, for the reasons offered hereafter, may possibly determine against them; but as to the want of such faith, should it at all appear, it does not follow, that while they allow

low a God, they must necessarily be indisposed towards him, or any of his creatures.

The human mind is a great and noble theme; it is a laudable contemplation; and to limit our researches to its powers and operations, will lead us to knowlege; but, if neglecting this, and leaping from their bounds into an inquiry what the human mind be after death, we are authorised by the ill success of *Dr. Priestly* and *Dr. Price* to determine, that all they know is, that they know nothing of it; and happy would it be for them, if thence sensible of the temerity which leads men into such disquisitions; and leaving a scene so full of perplexities, they would, from the insufficient attempts they have already made, turn to the study of *Locke* and *Hume* on the Human Mind; and, until they can improve upon them, confine themselves to nature's more proper province, in the study of common life. They may then in a degree cease a pursuit of what may for ever be concealed from them and all men; and avoid an ocean, where, (tottering and subject to the waves of folly, mistake, and uncertainty; beaten on one side by doubt's boundless sea, on the other by ignorance and incapacity) they might otherwise be lost on the rock of absurdity and error. It is this probability which at last will oblige philosophers to read *Pope* on Man with delight, when *Dr Priestly's* Essay on Matter and Spirit, and *Philosophical Necessity*, together with *Dr. Price's* Observations thereon, shall be consigned to oblivion.

C O N-

CONSIDERATIONS

ON THE

CONTROVERSY

BETWEEN

DR. PRIESTLY

AND

DR. PRICE.

PART THE FIRST.

Of Matter and Spirit.

PAGE 49, 50, correspondence. Dr. *Priestly* asserts, "That thinking is carried on *in* " *and by the brain itself*, because the faculty of " thinking can be traced no farther." And that " To suppose when the brain is destroyed, " the ideas remain in something else, is mere " hypothesis."

Page 51, " That according to the established " rules of philosophising, we are not to suppose
any

" any thing *within the brain to be the seat of*
*" thought *."*

Dr. Price answers,

If brutes or their sentient principle are annihilated at death, as hinted by Dr. Priestly, he is afraid it will not appear otherwise with men ; if so, a resurrection is contradictory.

Dr. Priestly replies,

That his reason for that hint about brutes is, that nothing is said of them in *revelation*, where only it is, we are told, that *men* will rise again.

Observation.

By this reasoning Dr. Priestly makes the brain aggregately the office and productive of thinking, which must cease when the brain perishes; and he refers to his disquisitions to prove, that whatever matter be, thinking is the result of a modification of it; and that that faculty does not belong to any invisible *substance* different from the body. Perhaps it does not belong to a different *substance* from the body; but does

* Mr. Locke says, we have the ideas of matter and thinking, but possibly shall never be able to know whether any mere material being thinks or no, it being impossible for us, by the contemplation of our ideas *without revelation*, to discover whether omnipotence has not given to some systems of matter fitly disposed a power to think, or else joined to matter so disposed a *thinking immaterial substance*.

Dr.

Dr. Priestly designedly make use of the word *substance*, and purposely substitute it for the word *power*, which invisibly and insensibly gave that body life, and of course to the brain the faculty of thinking; if he do, he is indefinite, and misleads his reader.

Dr. Priestly then asserts

That matter being subject to annihilation, because it may *be extended and divided* *, spirit is the same: to which

Dr. Price answers,

Page 57. That matter is incapable of *consciousness and thought*, not because extendable, but

* Notwithstanding what Mr. Locke has said, we need only to know that matter is extended and divisible to be assured that it cannot think; but when a philosopher asserts, that trees and rocks have thought and perception, he may puzzle us with his sophistry, but he will be no otherwise regarded, than as a man who would rather give sentiment to stocks and stones, than acknowledge man to have a soul.

Modern philosophers have acknowledged none but merely sensitive beings in nature, and the difference they make between men and stones is, that the former is sensitive with reflection, the latter without; but if all matter be sensible, wherein consists consciousness? If men be incapable of thinking, how are they able to perceive? a mere machine is evidently incapable of thinking; it has neither motion nor figure productive of reflection; whereas in man there exists something perpetually prone to expand and burst the fetters by which it is confined; space itself affords not bounds to the mind! our sentiments, our desires, anxieties and pride, take rise from principles different from that body, within which we perceive ourselves confined! See Rousseau.

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be-

because it is *solid*, and as such, inert and incapable of being *divided*, without being annihilated.

Page 69. That whatever the soul be, it must, if it be to exist for ever, be so *substantial* as to have no tendency to decay or wear out, but this cannot be true of any thing *compounded*.

Observation.

By which it appears, that if the soul be *matter*, which Dr. *Priestly* contends for, and *perishable with it*, it is not eternally existing, but it is something capable of giving existence to the body, at the sovereign fiat of him who gave it being in the first instance. On the contrary, according to Dr. *Price*, if the soul be eternal, it is *distinct from the body*, which is incapable of *consciousness and thought*, and must be so *substantial* as not to decay or wear out.—If we draw a line between these two directly opposite assertions, the latter of them leads us to ask what Dr. *Price* means by the word *substance**: when speaking

* It may be concluded, that the word *substance* used by our disputants, means the essence or nature of something, and not matter, in which sense philosophers employ it, when speaking of incorporeal substance, which is something essentially existing without body; and therefore if any thing, it is a mere spiritual being, as we know the soul to be; but (as Mr. David Williams says, in a note on Voltaire) what spirit is we have not the least knowledge, nor as Mr. Locke says, "Bating some very few *ideas* of spirit, we get from our own mind by reflection, and from thence, the best we can collect of the Father

ing of the soul, he says it must be so *substantial*, as to have no tendency to decay; for substance, in one sense, implies something that may be seen and handled; meaning matter; and it goes beyond all comprehension to say, that any substance, even of atoms, is eternal. If it be, what can that substance be composed or made of? It cannot be made of spirit—It is absurd to think it can—Spirit may cause existence and motion of that substance, therefore Dr *Price* seems, while denying the position of Dr. *Priestly*, to fall into it involuntarily, by saying, whatever the soul be, it must be so *substantial* as to have no tendency to decay; but suppose he intended to say *durable* instead of *substantial*, would not that word have answered his purpose better?

He

“ Father of all spirits, we have no certain information, so much as the existence of other spirits, but by *revelation*.”

In the words of Mr. David Williams, “ We are but imperfectly acquainted with matter, and it is impossible we should have a distinct idea of what is not matter; imperfectly instructed in what affects our senses, we cannot of ourselves know any thing of what is above them—We transport some words of our ordinary language into the depths of metaphysics and divinity, in order to gain some slight idea of things which we can never conceive or express—We endeavour to prop ourselves with those words; and to support our feeble understandings in those unknown regions.

“ Thus we use the word spirit, which may be explained breath or wind to express something which is not matter; and this word breath, wind, spirit, necessarily giving us an idea of a thin light *substance*, we refine on this in order to conceive of pure spirituality; but we shall never obtain a distinct idea on this subject. We do not know even what

He would then be more intelligible, and we might conclude, that when he said matter was distinct from spirit, and that spirit was eternal, he had in mind the existence of angels, which, fanciful as that is, would certainly be more adapted to his doctrine, because such supposed beings having nothing to do with *substance*, are fitted to eternity. And this is the most correct idea we can form of eternal beings, who, if we suppose any thing about them, must not be formed of matter, because all matter is perishable, and while existing, requires nourishment; by being subject to body, parts, passions, and decay, it is only fitted for this world, and not for those regions of the eternally blest, which we are told of in scripture. This may have led Dr. *Priestly* to assert with confidence,

Page 71. Correspondence, That *the whole man* becomes extinct at death, which is the generally, if not universally confessed opinion, in regard to brutes; but starting at this,

“ we say, when we pronounce the word *substance*, the literal meaning of it is something beneath,” (from *sto* to stand, *sub*, under, or *sub*, under, and *stratum*, strowed,) “ by that we know it is incomprehensible; for what is this something beneath (or strowed under)? The knowledge of the secrets of God is not allotted to this life; plunged as we are here in profound darkness, we fight one against the other, and strike at random in the obscurity of the night without knowing precisely what we contend for.” See *Williams's note in his translation of Voltaire on Toleration.*

Dr.

Dr. Price answers,

Page 71. That if death destroy the thinking *substance*, then a resurrection is contradictory to *nature and reason*. That death does not *naturally* destroy the soul; that it preserves its existence at death, and that, what then happens to it, can be no more than a *suspension* of its faculty, or an incapacitation, from which it will, *thro' Christ*, be delivered at the resurrection.—He then says, that if Dr. *Priestly* do not mean this, the resurrection will not be a resurrection, but a creation of a new set of beings.

Observation.

It is worthy remark, that the word *substance* made use of in this page by Dr. *Price*, is a very uncertain one (*see the preceding observation and the note*). If *substance* and thinking be distinct, one would imagine that the words *thinking faculty* would have been plainer. Let us examine the context—If death destroy the *thinking faculty*, then a resurrection is contradictory to nature and reason; thus says Dr. *Price*, or we will suppose him to say so, by putting the word *faculty* for *substance*, which is most likely his meaning, because he afterwards says that death does not naturally destroy the soul, whatever it be, meaning the thinking faculty, (surely not substance,) but that it preserves its existence at death, (of what?) the body, and is suspended,

pended, till delivered thro' *Christ* at the resurrection.

If we pass over Christianity, and give a greater scope to our comments than that profession will admit of, without the bigoted reflection of impiety, we are compelled to enquire what it is that Dr. *Price* means by saying, that if Dr. *Priestly* do not insinuate that the soul *is suspended*, as before quoted, there will be no resurrection, but a new creation? There is some assistance in the solution of this question by

Dr. *Priestly*, who asserts,

Page 72. Correspondence, That thinking is the result of a *certain arrangement of parts of matter*, which being deranged at death, is neither extinction, nor annihilation of them, and that their *re-arrangement after death*, is a proper resurrection*.

Ob-

* It is plain, that in order to admit of the existence only of one simple substance, we must suppose it possessed of qualities that are incompatible, and reciprocally exclusive of each other, such as those of thought and extension: one of which is essentially divisible, and the other incapable of being divided. Thought, or sentiment, is supposed to be a primitive quality, and inseparable from the substance to which it belongs; that it bears the same relation to it as even its extension—Hence we may conclude, that those beings which lose either of these qualities, lose the substance also to which it belongs; consequently, death is only a separation of substances, and the beings in which these two qualities are united, are composed of the two substances to which such qualities appertain. See *Rousseau*.

Simmius in *Plato*, says, if the soul be a harmony resulting from

Observation.

We are here brought to a point, and what Dr. Price calls a *new creation*, is called by Dr. Priestly a *re-arrangement of the same parts of matter*, which, by a certain previous arrangement, produced *thinking*, and which certainly is not a new creation.—Hence we must enquire how far Dr. Price disputes constantly the contrary, in support that the soul at death is *suspended*, and will be delivered *thro' Christ* at the resurrection. If the soul, or thinking faculty be *suspended at death*, where does it reside? If a *substance*, it must reside some where—If a spirit only, and substance and spirit be distinct, it must occupy some invisible space in the atmosphere—All this is inconsistent, for as a *substance*, it must perish like the body, and as a spirit, it cannot be delivered through Christ at a resurrection, it being to deny scripture and reason to say, that there will be a *resurrection of spirits*, which are invisible and intangible.—We are there told, that the sea shall give up its dead, and *the body* shall rise again.

Does not Dr. Price, therefore, by talking of the *suspension* of the soul at death in this manner, rather countenance than refute Dr. Priest-

from the disposition of the corporeal parts, it follows, that when this disposition is confounded, and the body torn by disease or other evil, the soul immediately (*whatever be her divinity*) must perish.

ly,

ly, who says, that *thinking* (which is the *soul*) being deranged with certain parts of matter that produced it at death, is by a re-arrangement with those parts of matter the *only, if any resurrection?* Is it more likely that the soul preserves its existence at death in an unknown region and an unknown form, and that it will be delivered from its suspenſe at the reſurrection, which is making the ſoul independant of the body? Or is it more likely, according to Dr. *Priestly*, that the ſoul is not independant of the body, but being deranged with it at death, it is neither *extinguished* nor *annihilated*, and that the re-arrangement of it after death is a proper reſurrection? that is to ſay, Is there to be any reſurrection at all? Or if the ſoul will not become *extinct* or *annihilate*, what becomes of it until that re-arrangement of parts of matter at a ſuppoſed reſurrection?

Theſe queſtions, after all that has been very looſely ſaid upon them on both ſides, muſt be answered by the reader himſelf, and he only muſt determine the poſſibility either that the ſoul is ſuſpended at death, as Dr. *Price* contends, or that being deranged with certain parts of the body at death, it is to be re-arranged afterwards, before he can form any opinion about a reſurrection!

In aid, however, of a determination on a reſurrection, we may aſk (if it do not increaſe difficulty) what Dr. *Priestly* means by reſting
it

it on a *re-arrangement of certain parts of matter*, which, before they were deranged at death, produced thinking (meaning the soul?) Does he mean thereby, that such *re-arrangement* will bring the *same man* * into being at the resurrection? he certainly does, and as

Dr. Price allows,

Pape 71, That the power that brought any substance (meaning matter it is supposed) into being may put it out of being, it is right to admit, while we allow of a Deity that such re-arrangement of parts, is reserved for that power after death † if a resurrection follow, of which *credat qui vult*. On the other hand, and according to these premises, Dr. Price stands in a dilemma, and rather staggers the understanding, by *suspending* the soul, which he calls a *thinking substance*, at death, to be delivered through Christ at the resurrection? and thus he founds a resurrection more on *Christ* than *philosophy*, which rejects the weakness of his arguments in support of it.

We are very much confounded when we bring Dr. Priestly and Dr. Price more immediately together in their correspondence. We may

* See Locke on Identity and Diversity.

† Mr. Locke says, it is not more remote from our comprehension to perceive that God can, if he please, superadd to matter a faculty of thinking, than that he should add to it another substance with a faculty of thinking. B. iv. s. 3.

recollect that the former gentleman has said that the *whole man becomes extinct* at death, on which we have already commented. In page 83, he says, that the *power of thinking* is destroyed with the body, but no particles of the man being lost, as many of them as were *essential* to him, will, he doubts not, be collected and revived at the resurrection, (which, by the way he has already rendered doubtful to expect,) when the *power of thinking* will return of course; so that, says he, "the man" that is the *soul*, "does not lose its existence at death in any other sense than that *the man loses the power of thinking*."—Thus he explains the apparent contradiction that the whole man becomes extinct at death, and that the soul afterwards preserves its existence.

Nothing can be more clear than that death deprives the man of the power of thinking, and pray what is that power but the soul? If it be the soul, Dr. Priestly says it does *not lose* its existence at death, but that being deranged with matter, a certain modification whereof it results from, it depends on a *re-arrangement* of such matter at the resurrection. Where then are we to suppose the *soul or power of thinking* to dwell until that re-arrangement after death? If it be any thing, it must have an intermediate state according to each disputant; the one saying that *death does not extinguish or annihilate it*, the other that it is *suspended* by death; so that they

they now nearly unite in *matter*, though not in *manner*, by preserving it after death, with this distinction; Dr. *Priestly* calls it a *power of thinking* to be given to the same body at the resurrection, which, in the interval between that and death, he says, is *not* extinct; and Dr. *Price* calls it a *suspension* of the soul, which is to be delivered through Christ.

The power of thinking can never die while we attribute eternity to the Deity from whom it is derived; but whether thinking be carried on *in* and *by the brain itself*, or by any thing *within it as the seat of thought* independantly, is entirely left to the reader, as a question undetermined by Mr. *Locke*.

We understand the power of thinking, and the *suspension* of the soul to be *God himself*, and we are now only perplexed with doubts about a resurrection, after the ingenious discussion of our disputants hitherto; the one contending that it will depend on the re-arrangement of certain parts of matter deranged at death, and that by a power which survives; the other, that it will depend on a *delivery* (thro' Christ) of the soul from its suspension after death.

This part of the controversy appears philosophically verbal on the part of Dr. *Priestly*, and christian on the part of Dr. *Price*, who shelters himself in the *christian* faith, from what he opposes in Dr. *Priestly's* sentiments on the

soul's existence, and a resurrection; and Dr. Price observing the tendency which Dr. Priestly's arguments had to affect christianity, he was alarmed and driven to differ with him in *words*, when *substantially* he agreed with him; and well might he be alarmed in reading Dr. Priestly.

Page 279. Illustration, where he says, " How
 " easy is it to get rid of all embarrassments at-
 " tending the doctrine of the soul in every view
 " of it, by admitting agreeably to all the phe-
 " nomena, that the *power of thinking* belongs
 " to the *brain* of a man; (though not as walk-
 " ing to the feet, or speaking to the tongue,
 " because, with great submission to the Doctor,
 " walking and speaking depend on the brain
 " also, and the tongue and feet are only instru-
 " ments acting under the same power;) that
 " therefore man, who is one being, is com-
 " posed of one kind of *substance*, made of the
 " dust of the earth; that when he dies, he of
 " course ceases to think, but when his sleeping
 " dust shall be re-animated at the resurrection,
 " his *power of thinking*, and his consciousness,
 " will be restored to him *."

By

* Mr. Locke says, he means not to lessen the soul's *immateriality*. Dr. Priestly here means the reverse. He does not, however, combat Mr. Locke's assertion " that
 " possibly we shall never be able to know whether mere ma-
 " terial beings think or not;" he only says that matter is in-
 " capable of consciousness; but does he not make matter con-
 scious

By this paragraph Dr. Price imagined that Dr. Priestly meant to say, that the *whole* man becomes extinct at death, and that his soul is not

scious by saying, that thinking is carried on *in and by the brain*? he surely does; but such are the contradictions which these pursuits afford, that he afterwards makes the soul *immaterial*, by saying, that it preserves its *existence at death*; for if the brain be thought, brain and thought die together; from whence only it is, that the *power* of thinking survives to the Deity, which is *the supposed soul's immateriality*; of which, without any proof, as Mr. Locke again says, "All the great ends of morality and religion are well enough secured, since it is evident that he who made us *sensible intelligent* beings, *can* and will *restore* us to the like state of sensibility in another world, and make us capable thereby to receive the retribution he has designed to men, according to their doings in this life; and therefore it is not of such mighty necessity, as some over zealous for or against the immateriality of the soul, have been forward to make the world believe." E. iv. f. 3.

Mr. Locke's reserve in this particular may be very becoming, but Dr. Priestly's freedom appears much more philosophical, by admitting without such reserve, that man is composed of one kind of substance, which, when re-animated at a *resurrection*, his *power* of thinking and consciousness will be restored to him.—In fact, Mr. Locke appears a materialist with timidity, and Dr. Priestly the same without any fear at all; Dr. Price, therefore, in defence of the soul's immateriality, seems to have been seduced into a controversy, from which he was obliged to withdraw and leave his adversary victorious, lest by a continuation of the argument, he should prove himself as great a materialist as either Mr. Locke or Dr. Priestly, in defiance of the scriptures, of which he is a diligent minister.

Mr. Rousseau was an immaterialist, but notwithstanding all his ingenuity when examining into the nature of man, he is (like most writers on the subject) often marvellous—He says that the power of the mind, which compares sensation, exists in man—He then makes two distinct principles in him, one raising him to the study of eternal truths, the other debasing him below himself, subjecting him to the slavery of sense;
from

not *suspended*. But it certainly is agreed to be suspended by Dr. *Priestly* himself, notwithstanding his own contradiction, when he says (page 83.) that it *does not lose its existence at death*, (a clear suspension of it,) for if the whole man die, how is it that the soul does *not lose* its existence at death? (see page 71, and 83.)

Dr. *Priestly* may get rid of all embarrassments of the soul by his foregoing reasoning; but if death make him that *dust of the earth* he

from whence he concludes, that man is *not* one simple individual substance, meaning by that word, a being possessed of some primitive qualities, abstracted from all particular or secondary modifications. This, with an observation on the oppression of the just, and the triumph of the wicked, leads him to determine that the soul is immaterial and an independant substance of the body, which, because he cannot conceive how a thinking being can die, he presumes it cannot die at all. But as he has not explained to us what that independant substance is, or how it can exist *out of man*, he had no right to presume that it can exist after the death of the body. The just may be oppressed and the wicked triumph in consequence of man's weakness and depravity-- a just and wise being is never oppressed---the triumph of the wicked ends in misery and punishment.

Mr. Rousseau playing further on the idea of the soul's immateriality, says, that we become insensible to the charms of virtue from the disgrace under which she labours in the world; but that when we are delivered *from the delusion of sense*, we shall enjoy the contemplation of the supreme being---Now to deliver us from the delusion of sense, is to deprive us of all our senses, and are we not to be so deprived at death? or are we, when so delivered, to be any thing at all? how or in what shape or form are we to contemplate the supreme being? Can we contemplate without sense? In short, Mr. Rousseau is here so imaginary, that we drop his book and say, that he sighed over his own chimeras, after he had reduced them to writing.

speaks

speaks of, which he admits shall be *re-animat-
ed* at a resurrection, is it not to be implied, that
he will resume the *same man and substance* he
is now, at least, that he will exist in *matter* as
he does now? Or into what re-animation of the
dust of the earth which death is to occasion, is he
to appear at the resurrection?—If it bring the
same man into life again, how will he be fitted
for eternity? Not at all, because being once
subject to *decay*, and once absolutely *decayed*,
the same, though re-animated dust of the earth,
must be so again; and surely the great author
of nature never intended to give man a *second*
existence for any *new world* after the helpless,
and respecting *himself*, the wretched figure he
made in the one he passed through! Besides,
supposing omnipotence to have given to some
system of *matter* fitly disposed, *a power to think*,
and that that power may be *revived* after death,
is not that matter *finite* and unfitted for eter-
nity?

To free ourselves from all embarrassments of
the soul, (according to Dr. *Priestly's* way of
reasoning,) is positively to conclude, that if a
resurrection be effected by a re-animation of the
same dust of the earth, a resurrection is *impos-
sible*, because in that case we are *not fitted to*
eternity, and to talk of a *re-animation of the*
soul, would be complete nonsense; Dr. *Priestly*
may nevertheless, be right.

Seneca

Seneca says, *Mors quam pertimescimus ac recusamus intermittit vitam non erepit*, which seems the sum of Dr. Priestly's doctrine, and all we can hope for without *revelation*; yet to get rid of all embarrassments about the soul, is to free ourselves of the fear of death, which nothing but *unconsciousness, or insensibility, as among brutes*, will enable us to do; excepting by that degree of *faith* in religion, which *many* have pretended enthusiastically to enjoy, but which *few* in reality possess.

Thus much for the controversy on *matter of spirit*, which, after great seeming opposition is frittered down simply to this: Our disputants have traced the soul of man up to the deity; in him they have reposed it, as the only supreme master of it, to be disposed of by him after its departure from the body at death, either in *re-animating the dust of the earth*, which death is to reduce us to at a resurrection, or otherwise, as he in his supernal and incomprehensible greatness shall hereafter please!

And hence it is, that the correspondence of our disputants (if at all) tends to indispose Dr. Priestly, not towards God or man, because those who know him, know his worth in the contrary, but towards *christianity*; by not grounding his belief of a *resurrection* upon it, he rests the *possibility* of rising again on *the will and power of the Deity*, and cautiously resorts to *revelation*,

velation, to avoid a Christian's censure, by a pretence that his disquisitions were written in *defence of the christian doctrine*. He is, however, a good and great man, and can only suffer reproach for his philosophy in the opinion of the ignorant bigoted enthusiastic vulgar, who he certainly did not mean to capitate; while Dr. Price, his esteemed friend, will ever be admired for the simplicity of his character, the purity of his heart, the clearness of his understanding, and the christianity of his conduct.

F

PART

PART THE SECOND.

Of Necessity.

RESPECTING the doctrine of necessity (although long disputed) which has been denied by some men, and admitted by others, it has been found that both the learned and the ignorant have always been of the same opinion about it, and that their controversies upon it would have been at an end long ago, had they but employed a few intelligent definitions.— Their using various terms to communicate the same ideas, has been the undoubted cause of this, and had they (as Mr. Locke says) made their words signs of their ideas, and confined them arbitrarily to those signs, when like ideas were intended to be conveyed, disputes would not have been violent or verbose among us, and their whole contentious arguments might be contained in a *nut shell*.

If we take upon us to doubt the uniformity in the operations of nature, wherein (as Mr. *Hume* says) similar objects are constantly con-
joined

joined together, and the mind determined by custom to infer the one from the appearance of the other, we must absolutely deny a Necessity; but this, as all human observation confirms, being impossible, our ideas of that necessity depends intirely thereon.

Necessarians do not insist that all things that happen are inevitable on the principle of predestiny, but that they happen from a necessary and inevitable connection between cause and effect; and they determine the certainty of the one from the appearance of the other by custom and experience in the uniform operations of nature.—They go no further, and are obliged to stop their inquiries here, because it has exceeded the powers of philosophy to trace causes to their source; or to determine positively whether man be or be not master of his own actions, and at liberty to act or not to act, as he please, independent of any superior or other being.—If he be moved by chance, pushed on by fate, and drawn by necessity, he is devoid of *all* liberty and is but as brutes, an agent acted upon, and acting only subordinately to some end, concealed from him in the general system of the universe.—He cannot be free if all his actions be antecedently determined.—He can have no choice from fate, or be virtuous while acting under necessity.—Neither can he be blamed or praised for what he could not avoid.—As philosophers have long been brought to a stand still

in this point which regards man only in respect to the universal system, and the secret purpose of his creation, (a purpose insignificant compared to the creation at large,) it is foreign to the argument to speak of him merely as related to his fellow creatures in society.—He there (and we know nothing of him elsewhere) appears to be at liberty, and has a power of acting, or not acting, according to the determination of his will, which is influenced by pleasure and pain, virtue and vice, right and wrong.—Pleasure to him is happiness, virtue, and right; pain is misery, vice, and wrong.—In proportion to his wisdom and knowledge, will be his goodness and bliss. Since wisdom abounds in virtue, and ignorance in wickedness and devotion, man's liberty in society, is governed by a choice in doing good for interest, and conscious satisfaction in things which society have marked with the name of right; and by an abhorrence of things marked with the name of wrong.—While the brute is moved by instinct, man is moved by reason.—He acts from reflection, the brute from sense.—A horse before a manger full of corn will eat it, if left to himself, although he be to run a race the next hour; a man who is to ride him will refrain from eating tho' he be hungry, because reflection tells him that he will be lighter on the horse's back, and that the lighter he is, the faster the horse will run.—The one has no liberty but what is immediately necessary to his pre-

preservation, the other has liberty by reflection, a faculty which some writers have thought superfluous; but this liberty being influenced by the passions, and the passions agitated by ignorance, or rendered calm and serene by wisdom, ignorance and wisdom become causes, and liberty produces their effects—A wise man will exert his liberty in the choice of good and right; an ignorant barbarous one in the choice of evil and wrong—A wise man will be obedient to the laws of nature, man, and truth; an ignorant barbarous one will break them all, and be prevented but by the fear of punishment, or the want of temptation—One man robs you on the highway; the cause is want, distress, or madness—the robbery is the effect; another man robs me, I attribute it to the same cause; the robbers acted under liberty, which was influenced by a will corrupted by vice and wrong; vice and wrong were the cause; and the effect being injurious, was vicious and wrong by necessity—It is contradictory to say that wrong, as a cause, produces right as an effect; that would be to destroy necessity indeed!—But were the causes of these robberies inevitable? the robberies having happened they certainly were; for if the robbers had been possessed of powers to prevent their operations, their effects had never been produced—The robbers had liberty to act, but their will being influenced by corrupt causes, they wanted liberty to forbear acting

acting—They were like the horse at a manger full of corn, (as premised,) and not like the man that was to ride him; they wanted a virtuous reflection, and being governed by vitiated reason, were, in respect to liberty, like brutes; in respect to necessity, below them—The horse had instinct, and acted according to nature—the robbers had reason and abused it; but although they may be said to act from moral ignorance and wickedness, when they robbed, it does not follow, that others equally ignorant and wicked, may not avoid robbing—Every cause producing an effect is inevitable; but possibly a like cause may be avoided, and never operate in the will of one man, although it may in the will of another—I commit murder to gratify my malice and revenge, the gratification makes me wretched, and I could not help it—You may never have those devilish passions, and may never perpetrate their effects by murder—It is the divine office of wisdom and virtue to prevent our possessing these passions—Nature places these within our ken, and makes them point to our chief end respecting ourselves in happiness—Scorning these, and indolently preferring ignorance and vice, it is no reproach to nature, that having left us at liberty to prefer and obtain them, she punishes us for our derision; which she certainly does, by conferring the power of punishment upon us, at the moment of our creation, in the faculty of reflection—

tion—Thus man may be a free agent respecting himself, but not so in respect to the great author of nature, who, perhaps, recompences one part of his human creation who are wise and good, for the misfortunes, vices, or accidents of the other, who are ignorant and abandoned—Man may be wise and good—If ignorant and bad, the cause may be traced in the faults of his education, productive of moral actions, injurious to himself and others—The *future* actions of one moral agent, may be made *wise and virtuous*, from an *abhorrence of the perils attendant on the past actions of another*; yet let both be actuated by the same motives, and the same effects will succeed. This is all we know of liberty or necessity, unless we presume to trace up all our actions to the Deity, and deduce them from him down to ourselves by reason and nature. If the Deity be the ultimate author of all our actions, a murderer is more to be pitied than blamed, because the motive to murder was not his own; and the liberty of his will being unrestrained, murder is just and right when committed, but not before—This is natural, rude, and ungoverned intellectual liberty, which requires restraint. Nature suggested the power to her creature man, by enabling him to establish civil societies, legislatures, and laws, for the furtherance of his future interest, and happiness, and safety. She suggested the enactment of these laws, to operate
only

only as a terror to the mind, to prevent those actions, which otherwise were agreeable to the laws of nature in its rude and ungoverned state; and on failure of such terror in its effect, it may be socially right to punish the offending agent—Nature, however, still remains firm and infallible; all perfect and complete; and human errors, with their consequent punishment, being derived from her, constitute a part of her universal plan!

Dr. *Priestly* and Dr. *Price* have finally agreed on this subject, notwithstanding the length of their correspondence, which has undoubtedly been spun out into what we find it, from no other cause than their having the same ideas upon the subject in the beginning of the dispute, without employing the same words as signs of their ideas, until they come to the end of it; but this is mere assertion, let us examine the fact.

Dr. *Priestly*,

Page 148, says, "The difference which Dr. *Price* and others make between moral and physical causes and effects appears to be between *voluntary* and *involuntary causes and effects*." Where involuntary motives are concerned, as in the case of a man dragged by force, it is absurd to use any reasoning, or to apply rewards or punishments, because they can have no effect; but where voluntary motions

tions are concerned, as in the case of a man who is at liberty to go where he pleases, &c. reasoning rewards and punishments have the greatest propriety, because the greatest effect, for they are applied to, and influence or move the will, as much as external force moves the body *.

Observation.

In nothing does the doctrine of necessity appear more perfect than in this reasoning; for as the idea of liberty is the idea of a power in any agent to do or forbear any action, according to the determination of his mind, whether either be preferred to the other; so where either of them is not in the power of the agent to be produced by him, then he is not at liberty, but under necessity.

But Dr. Price asks,

“ Is God’s permitting beings in the use of
“ such powers to act *wickedly* † the same with
“ being

* The principle of all action (as has been asserted by some writer on the subject) lies in the will of a free being.—We can go no farther in search of its source—Liberty is well defined, but necessity is not, for to suppose any act or effect which is not derived from an active principle, is to suppose effects without a cause—Either there is no first impulse or every first impulse can have no prior cause; nor can there be any such thing as will without liberty, which renders man a free agent.

† Nothing is an evil but what is contrary to nature: (if it be possible that any thing suffered by nature can be an evil,
G which

“ being himself the agent of their wickedness?
 “ Or can it be reasonable to say that *he appoints*
 “ what cannot be done without breaking his
 “ laws, contradicting his will, and abusing his
 “ powers? If so (says he) there can be no
 “ sense of shame or remorse, no repentance,
 “ confession, or pardon !”

Dr. *Priestly* answers,

Page —, That a necessarian, let him use what efforts he will, feels the sentiments of shame, remorse, and repentance, which arise *mechanically* from his referring actions to *himself*; and oppressed with a sense of guilt, he will have recourse to that mercy of which he will stand in need.

Again, page —, That repentance, confession, and pardon, are all adapted to a *different, imperfect, and fallacious view of things*, but if he (man) be really capable of viewing the great system *, and his own conduct as part of it

which some have doubted,) things and actions are good and evil, but according to established rules of conduct relatively in society, prescribed to individuals by their common consent for public and private happiness. In a state of rude un-governed, though social nature, man has no rule of conduct but what he prescribes to himself independently of his fellow-creatures, which is undoubtedly right.

* If man be an active and free being, he acts of himself; none of his spontaneous actions enter into the general system of providence, nor can be imputed to it---Providence doth not contrive the evil, which is the consequence of man's abusing the liberty his Creator gave him; it only doth not prevent it, because

it in a true light, his supreme regard to God as the great, wise, and benevolent author of all things, his intimate communion with him will necessarily be such, that he can have no will but God's.

Page 300, "What I mean, therefore, says he,) is, that a truly practical necessarian will stand in no need of the sentiments of *self-applause or reproach*. He will be under the influence of a much superior principle, loving God and his fellow-creatures, which is the sum of all religion, and leads to every thing excellent in conduct, from motives altogether *independant of himself*."

Observation,

Dr. *Priestly* here makes nothing go wrong, and confirms the liberal sentiment of Mr. *Pope*, that "Whatever is, is right;" but pressed by Dr. *Price* to say, whether God's *permitting* beings to act wickedly, is not equally being the agent thereof, he finds it necessary to attribute

because it either would restrain his liberty, or be beneath its notice---Providence leaves us at liberty to do good, not evil, and hath enabled us to make the choice (after they are distinguished to us) by a proper use of our faculties, the powers whereof are so weak, that the abuse of them, discoverable only among us by reflection and analogy, is too inconsiderable to distrust the general order of the universe---Our ills fall on ourselves and make no change in the system of the world---To complain therefore, that God doth not prevent them, is to complain that he has given a superior excellence to human nature.

good to the Deity, and evil to man—This leaves us nevertheless in the dark, and verifies Mr. Hume's words, that it exceeds all the power of philosophy, to explain whether the Deity be or be not equally the source of the one and the other; to allow, according to Dr. Priestly, that man has no will but God's, then "Whatever is, is right," and nothing is wrong, that is *permitted* by the Deity. What then has reason, rewards, and punishments to do among us? Certainly nothing but as they respect our *interest or convenience here*; and if *nothing be wrong*, what can Dr. Priestly mean by saying, that man, oppressed with a *sense of guilt*, will have recourse to that mercy of which he will stand in need when every thing is right? Is not this a contradiction? Dr. Priestly either intended to shew that as a practical necessarian was always and in every thing under the influence of a *superior being*, he never could be directed to do wrong; or else, by being oppressed with guilt, he directed *himself to evil*, and required mercy for it; but his meaning by this argument, is mysterious; for if all things *be right*, *mercy is unnecessary*, and we cannot be oppressed by guilt, except in the mechanical way, the Doctor speaks of in page 148.

The words good and evil are commonly in our mouths, but they are of difficult comprehension—The former *must* be the attribute of the Deity, the latter *may* of man in the abuse
of

of his reason and experience, for which he will suffer a temporary and worldly punishment, even in the reflection of those actions which he could not prevent; because the motives that produced them not being his own *, nor within his controul, he was unable to stifle them. In regard to brutes we are told that they will not rise again because they are not mentioned in *revelation*, (a safe reason indeed,) but it may be said, that although they have a peculiar kind of reason which they cannot abuse, yet if brutes be not bare machines, (as some would have them,) the only difference between them and men is, that men form general ideas by abstraction, whereas brutes reason on particular objects and ideas without that abstraction. Is man therefore answerable for what is called the abuse of his reason, and brutes not answerable for their actions?

But what shall we say on observing, that Dr. Price and Dr. Priestly close their correspondence in a proof that *nothing is wrong*.

Dr. Price

In his last letter says, that he has never meant to say more than that the *permission of wickedness* is proper, and that the divine plan required the communication of powers rendering beings capable of perversely making themselves *wicked*, by acting not as the divine law required, but in a manner that opposes the divine plan and will,

* See note ante page 28.

and that would subvert the order of nature, and to which, on this account, punishment has been annexed.

Dr. Priestly,

In his answer says, That he cannot help thinking that the *permission* of evil, or the certain cause of it, by a being who foresees it, and has sufficient power to prevent it, as equivalent to the express *appointment* of it.

Observation.

The position at last is (according to Dr. Price) that God in his divine plan communicated powers, making beings capable perversely of wickedness, by acting contrary to what that plan required, so as to subvert the order of nature, to which punishment is annexed; and, (according to Dr. Priestly,) that the *permission* of such powers is equal to an *appointment* of the wickedness they may produce, to which, if punishment be annexed, he punishes himself *in us and by us*.

Now Dr. Price, by making wickedness the result of powers which the divine plan *permitted*, makes it punishable on account of the exertion of those powers; but Dr. Priestly very archly catching at the word *permitted*, and saying that he thinks it no less than *appointed*, contends that those powers coming from God himself, nothing is punishable that comes from them, except by the consent of mankind in states

states of political society, wherein it is presumed, that wickedness, after being generated in rude, ungoverned, and primitive states, was nourished and matured; until grown gigantic and insufferable, it became necessary to demolish it by every means that human invention could suggest. It is more to be attributed to man than the Deity, it being morally produced and not divinely; although the powers producing it may be traced up to the divine plan.

Mr. *Hume* very ably says, that the final sentence which constitutes virtue our happiness, and vice our misery, depends on some internal sense which nature has made universal in the whole species; but they do not equally pursue the one and avoid the other—Education, habit, sentiment may make us morally wicked, for which we shall find a punishment in reflection; but with which the great system of nature has nought to do.

Rewards and punishments are of civil institution; beyond this terrene existence they are fabulous, and God being the great author of all things, and the actions of men being derived from him, it is immaterial whether he *permits* or *appoints* wickedness, since nothing can be wrong that flows from so high and almighty a source—There can be no wickedness in regard to *our relation to him*, nor among ourselves in gross whatever there may be in part, “All partial
“evil, universal good.” And thus are we to
suppose

suppose that all laws are founded on rewards and punishments, because these motives have a regular influence in the mind, and both produce what men have consented to call good, and prevent the bad actions of one another in society. We may give to this influence what name we please, (says Mr. *Hume*,) but as it is usually conjoined with the action, it must be esteemed a cause, and be looked on as an instance of necessity.

It may be objected, after this examination, which seems to strike deep against rewards and punishments, (except as established by human laws,) that a man is as inoffensive and guiltless after committing a horrid act, as at his birth; to which it may be answered, that actions are by nature *temporary and perishing*, and where they proceed not from some cause in the character and disposition of the person who performed them, they can neither redound to his honour if good, or infamy if evil. The actions may be blameable, because contrary to law or rules of morality; but the person is only morally answerable for them *by consent*, and as they proceeded in him from nothing that is *constant or durable*, it is impossible that he can on their account become the object of punishment; for actions render a person criminal merely as they are proofs of a criminal principle in the mind; and when by an alteration of that principle they cease to be just proofs, they also cease to be criminal.

If the *permission* of wickedness which Dr. Price says may be committed contrary to the divine plan (and this by the way lessens the dignity of divinity,) for which punishment is annexed, be in reality an *appointment* of it by him who foresees and has power to prevent it, it is very clear that the doctrine of Necessity is not to be controverted, and that the annexing a punishment hereafter to what happens in consequence of it is absurd, and derogatory of that infinite wisdom and perfection, which all men allow, forms the omnipotent character of the Deity.

But as these distinctions are founded in the natural sentiments of the human mind, and these sentiments not controulable by philosophy, we must be contented to make the most of them in sifting the true from the adulterate as well as we can; and philosophers must comfort themselves with the hope of accomplishing the great task of overcoming all difficulties, which oppose them in the discovery of truth; that is to say, whether the Deity be the ultimate author of all our actions, comprising moral guilt and turpitude, or virtue and honour, which nothing but the doctrine of Necessity has made a question of.

If he be, what are we to say of conscience*?

* Conscience is defined to be the liberty of knowing our own actions which cannot be restrained.

Is there not reason to believe that it arises *mechanically* in us from our *referring actions to ourselves*, and that it is adapted to an imperfect and fallacious view of things, while if capable of viewing the great system, and our own conduct as part of it in a true light, our regard to and intimate communion with God, will necessarily be such, that we can have no will but his, and of course be incapable of guilt, crimes being confined to this world among men only, which vanish with themselves? But is this all respecting conscience? Will it not dictate to us that we are capable of *wrong* in regard to the Deity, and of course to ourselves? If merely to ourselves in a state of society right and wrong are only rules, which we derive from the same necessity observable in all our actions, and that therefore by viewing them imperfectly respecting ourselves in part, we are deceived as to the whole system, in our ideas of right and wrong; as if these distinctions existed in the divine plan. Conscience then is of no virtuous efficacy as a silent monitor of good, farther than relates to our own worldly *interest and convenience*, which when turned towards the Deity, reflects on the actions we have committed with pleasure; or remorse, shame, and repentance; qualities no otherwise useful to us than as teaching us to keep God constantly in view, whereby we are more fully convinced that we can never have
any

any other will than his, that is to say, he will thence be more directly *in us and with us*, and illuminate us for his glory and our happiness.

General COROLLARY.

On the whole, Dr. *Priestly* and Dr. *Price's* discussion amounts to this,

On Matter and Spirit.

• Dr. *Priestly*.

That the *whole* man becomes extinct at death ; That he will rise again according to *revelation* only ; That the mode of his rising will not be by a new creation, but by a *re-arrangement of matter*, called afterwards a re-animation of the original dust of the earth—And that brutes are the same altogether, but are *omitted in scripture*, and therefore after death will remain eternally dust. Thus *he favours christianity*, by telling us that Christ's resurrection was *well* attested, and that our's, *through him*, will sometime follow.

On Necessity.

That a man's liberty being philosophically derived from God, his actions are so also, and that though an agent, he does not act from

himself but from God; That those actions he commits are right with respect to the *whole great system of nature*, however wrong they may be in *morals*, which relate to the man only as a *social* being.

That all his actions are right as proceeding from God, and that he only is capable of wrong relatively, as such actions may affect his *interest or happiness*, which being *permitted or appointed* by God, are, as to him, ultimately proper.

Dr. Price.

On Matter and Spirit.

That the whole man does *not* become extinct at death, which does not naturally destroy the soul; That if death destroy the thinking *substance* there can be no resurrection, and men will be but as brutes at death.

That the soul therefore is separate from the body, and *suspended* at death, from which it will be delivered through Christ at the resurrection.

On Necessity.

That physical liberty constituting all our actions *our own, independent of any foreign cause*, the doctrine of Necessity destroys all virtue, by making God the author of wickedness.

That the *permission* of wickedness is proper, and the powers of it are given by the divine plan,

plan, which annexes punishment in consequence.

On all of which—Who is right? or rather which of our worthy disputants is it that most commands our judgment in his favour? Respecting a resurrection, they both agree to rest it on *the faith of revelation*, whereby the more fervent our faith, the warmer will be our hope independent of all philosophy; and as to the soul, whatever it be, whether *substantial* or *corporeal*; an *incorporeal substance*, (meaning substance without body,) or something *material* or *immaterial*, they both consign it to the custody of the Deity at death, until that glorious but wonderful period, when the body in whom it dwelt shall rise again.

Respecting necessity, they likewise both agree in making the Deity the ultimate author of all our actions, which must in viewing the great system of nature be right; and the admission of Dr. Price, that the *permission* of wickedness is proper, is as Dr. Priestly says, equivalent to the *appointment* of it by the Deity; which constitutes them, to all appearance, necessarians; though in fact, they have wisely thought proper, the one to attribute evil to man and good to the Deity, and the other to free him from all agency in sin, by making man *physically* the author of his actions, which seems unreasonable and preposterous, unless he be proved to

to be *the author of the powers producing them.*

If therefore it appear from the whole discussion of Dr. *Priestly* and Dr. *Price* on these points, and the preceding commentaries upon them, that it has ended in *Nothing*; and that all their trouble has been but time mispent in a wanton waste of their ingenuity, it will be a great proof of the limitation of human knowledge, which can go no farther than we have ideas, since ideas are mental images representing to us whatever our minds perceive; so that it is undoubtedly necessary to perceive, or be impressed with an object before it be possible to describe it; from our deficiency herein on metaphysical subjects, all that confusion and disagreement of ideas, which disdainfully has obtained the name of jargon, very naturally succeeds; and after swelling out our inquiries into truths, which perhaps the Deity has for our advantage reserved for ever to himself, satisfies us of our presumption and insignificance.

How far our disputants in particular merit the attention of their reader, none but the reader can determine; who, if a philosopher, may call a search after the soul the chase of a shadow—then shutting their book, and breathing out a pensive sigh, exclaim, alas, what is man!

C O N-

C O N C L U S I O N.

HAVING in the foregoing considerations compared and tried the opinions of our disputants, and drawn some inferences from them, it may be expected that something shall be said on the whole of their philosophical controversy.—As philosophy is a glorious retreat for great and good men, we cannot be too cautious of offending it, by upbraiding those who pretend to profess it—Nature has made but few philosophers—She pointed them out in a *Newton*, a *Descartes*, a *Verulam*—They had no other preceptor ! But education, vanity, and presumption, have made thousands of philosophers out of fools, and in this improving age, when almost all men are candidates for fame, not to be thought wise is criminal and indignant ; philosophers therefore, or pretenders to philosophy, we have in abundance ; yet to the few who most deserve the name, if we appeal for instruction, we shall find ourselves deceived or disappointed ; for though they separately open a door, and each announce to us, “ Walk in, walk in, for I am the only true “ doctor,” they all contradict one another, mislead and confound themselves in the end, and leave us to marvel at their absurdity and error. They draw our attention, and sometimes amuse it,

it, but contribute nothing to our happiness--- One tells us that there is no such thing *as matter*, but that every thing is merely representative---another declares that there is no other thing but matter*, and both make philosophy the only true worship---Some men defend a God, while others maintain that there is no other god but the world itself. It was otherwise in the days of primeval simplicity---In earlier ages, mankind, by being less remote from unrefined nature, were happy in that ignorance from whence their posterity were conducted by the sciences, which, considered as to the world at large, have scattered abundant woes among its human inhabitants, and seduced them from those active scenes, for which they were by nature formed---They have (as a respectable writer † maintains) first consulted, and then corrupted us---Speaking in the general, they have vitiated our morals, and they have converted men into libertines for *the sake of vice*, instead of correcting their taste, or rendering it delicately sensible of virtues most poignant of relish!

But in no instance have they been found more deceiving, than in leading us to attempt the removal of impediments which nature, at every

* According to the Socratic system there are three principles of all things, God, Matter, and Ideas; God is the universal intellect, Matter the subject of generation and corruption, Idea, an incorporeal substance the intellect of God, God the intellect of the world.

† Rousseau.

turning, has laid in our way against gratifying our metaphysical researches, and which brought Mr. *Locke* to doubt "that how far soever human industry may advance useful and experimental philosophy in *physical* things, yet "*scientific*" will still be out of our reach."

We derive our taste for study from the supposed success of our progress in it—Our first discoveries encrease our curiosity to know still more, and the more we know, the more we find there is still to learn, which added to the time and labour we lose in the former, spurs us on to lose still more in search of the latter; but few of us grow sensible of our ignorance in proportion to the increase of our, at most, little knowledge, which extends no farther than our ideas!

Philosophy, however, is the foundation of natural virtue, and a true philosopher will be a good and virtuous man, whatever frailties may attend him—Neither is it because its votaries have studied in vain, that philosophy should be condemned—Would we willingly apply ourselves to it, we must throw off the trammels of morality, and forget in a degree our social and popular learning; but whenever the study of it *disturb the mind, without enriching the understanding*; it is proper that we as willingly abandon it, and return to our prejudices, occasioned by habit and education.

F I N I S.

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